

The background is a complex, colorful illustration. At the top, a large, gnarled tree with a treehouse sits against a blue sky. Below the tree, a globe is depicted with various patterns and colors. Musical notes and staves are scattered throughout the scene, suggesting a connection between music and the world. In the foreground, several hands of different colors (purple, blue, grey) are shown holding or supporting the globe. The overall style is artistic and expressive, with a focus on themes of care, culture, and aging.

Care & Aging ⁱⁿ Culture



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Project background

Caring Across Generations (CAG) is working to create power around communities of care. Older people, people with disabilities, and others deserve compassionate, competent care. And the paid experts and family members who provide that care deserve respect, a living wage, and an ecosystem of support.

The question is how to tell this story and where. CAG has partnered with Harmony Labs to explore existing audiences for care. This report, the second of two, describes how audiences, defined by their core values, experience narratives about aging and eldercare in the media they consume. Specifically:

- The places where they see narratives about aging and eldercare
- The kinds of aging and eldercare narratives they encounter online
- What new narratives about aging and eldercare might reach them

The findings of the two reports will support a communications strategy that reaches audiences where they spend their time with content that can connect with, and move them toward a vision of communities of care.

Methods & data

For this report, Harmony Labs combined a values-based audience segmentation with opt-in internet and television panel data, touching 200,000+ Americans and offering a minute-by-minute view into the content audiences care about, wherever they consume or create it.

We analyzed internet and television viewership and aging and eldercare content between June 2020 and March 2021 by matching online media to a set of keywords related to aging, long-term care, and in-home, long-term care, according to the CAG audience segmentation presented in the "Audience Definition Memo." We represent rate of topic encounters on internet platforms using reach—the percent of daily users on a platform who encounter content about a given topic.

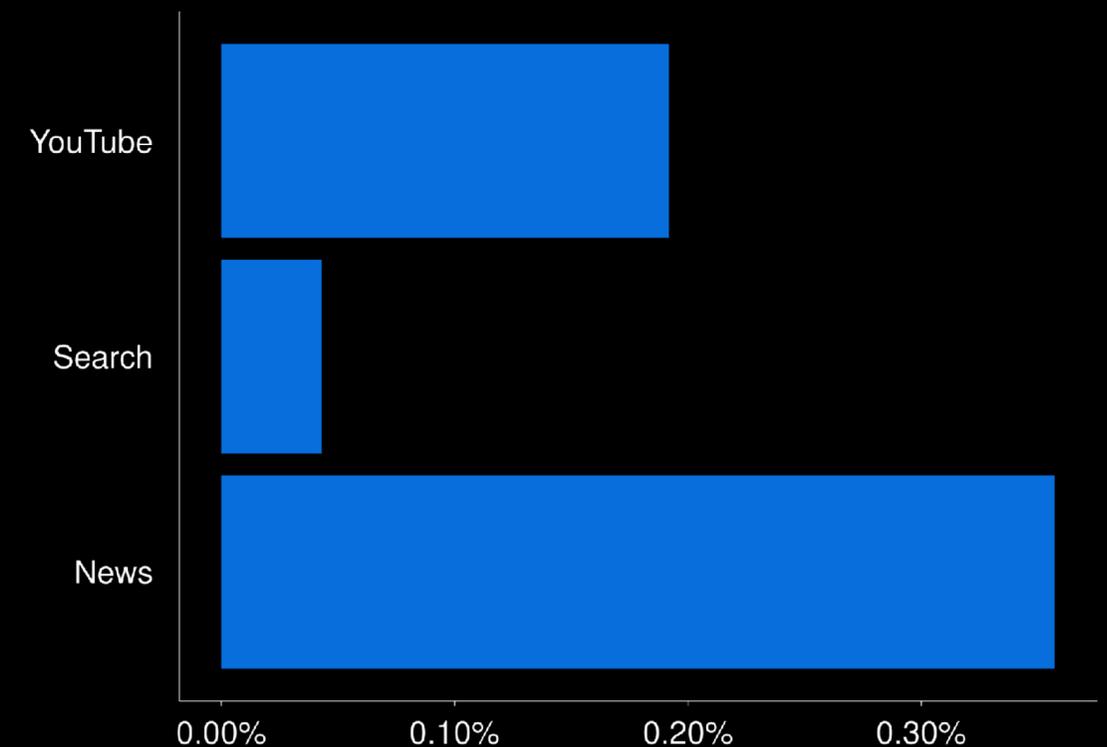
We also share a qualitative analysis that distinguishes the major themes of the aging and care-related content that viewers consume.

Aging reach x platform

We looked at consumption of aging content across 4 media types: YouTube, Search, News, and TV Ads. We excluded aging topics like retirement and “anti-aging” and only included content about “getting older,” “aging parents,” and the “elderly.”

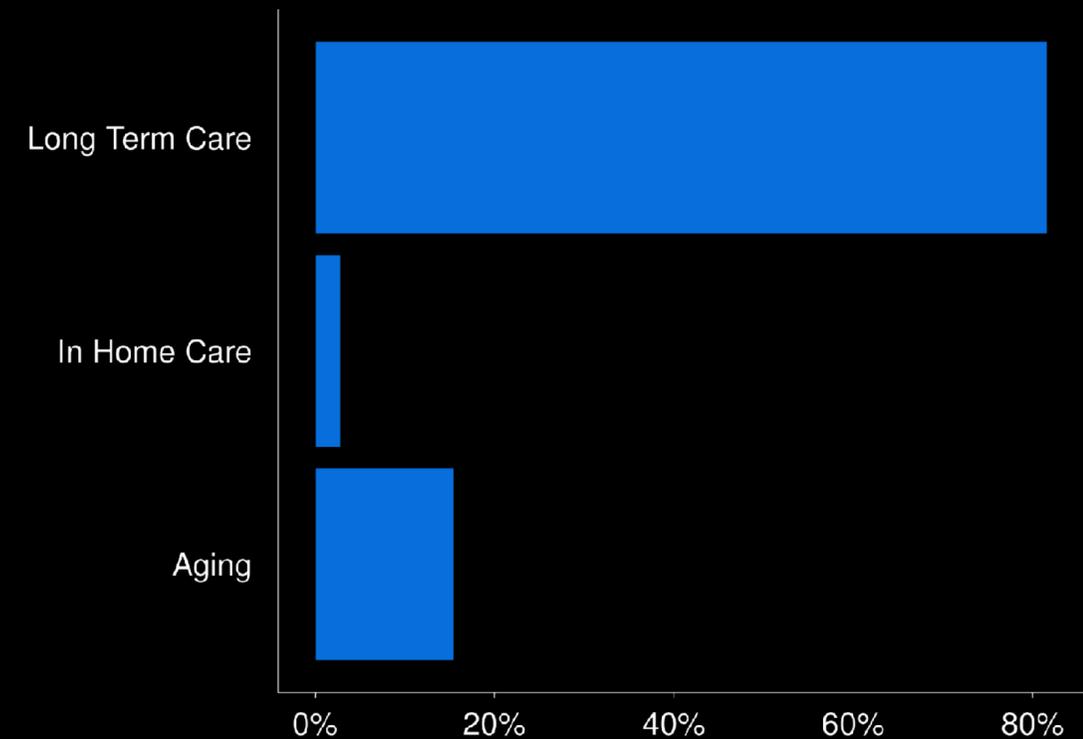
Across these platforms people rarely encounter or seek content related to aging, care, or home care. The place they are most likely to encounter it is TV Ads. 4.7% of daily users watch a program that has at least 1 ad related to aging or care. (We didn't represent this in visualization to the right, in order to keep consistency in the scale.) However, this is likely an over-estimate, as viewers may not see all of the ads associated with a program.

On the other platforms, users are mostly likely to see aging or care content in the news, but even this only reaches on average of 0.36% of the total audience each day.



Aging in context of care

Among audiences who view aging content each day, we expected to see that they consumed lots content about aging abesent any mention of care. However, stories about aging in the context of care were actually much more common than stories about aging alone. Nursing homes in particular are a big theme in this kind of content, partly because those facilities were the locations of COVID outbreaks, but also because the whole narrative of care seems to be coded by “nursing home” and dominated by stories of care facilities specifically.



Care calamity

The most common narrative, across audiences in the content about aging and eldercare people view, represents the experience of aging and receiving care as calamity, rife with vulnerability, violence, and risk. COVID looms large. And care settings show up as dangerous places. While nurses and doctors received widespread support throughout the pandemic, paid caregivers were often presented as threats to people who need care.

Fewer than 1% of Americans live in long-term care facilities, but 40% of COVID-19 deaths have occurred there.

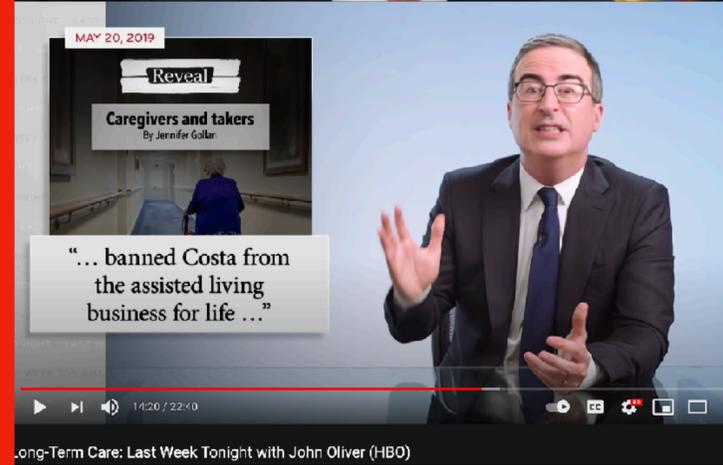


Suspect charged with murder after death of 75-year-old Asian man who was attacked on his daily walk

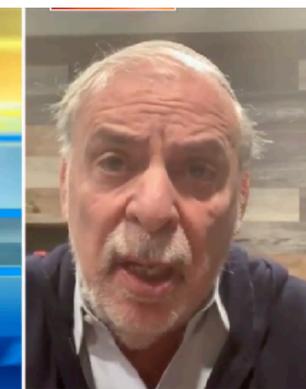
The Oakland Police Department said Thursday that Teaunte Bailey "has a history of victimizing elderly Asian people."

Cuomo Aides Spent Months Hiding Nursing Home Death Toll

Aides to the New York governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, repeatedly prevented state health officials from releasing the number of nursing home deaths in the pandemic.



Cuomo silent as damning watchdog report says policy may have led to over 1,000 nursing home deaths



PRESSURE MOUNTS ON CUOMO OVER NURSING HOME CRISIS



An elderly pedestrian in Chinatown. | Hiram Alejandro Durán/THE CITY

Older Asians Face 'A Whole Wave' of Hate Hidden in Official NYPD Stats

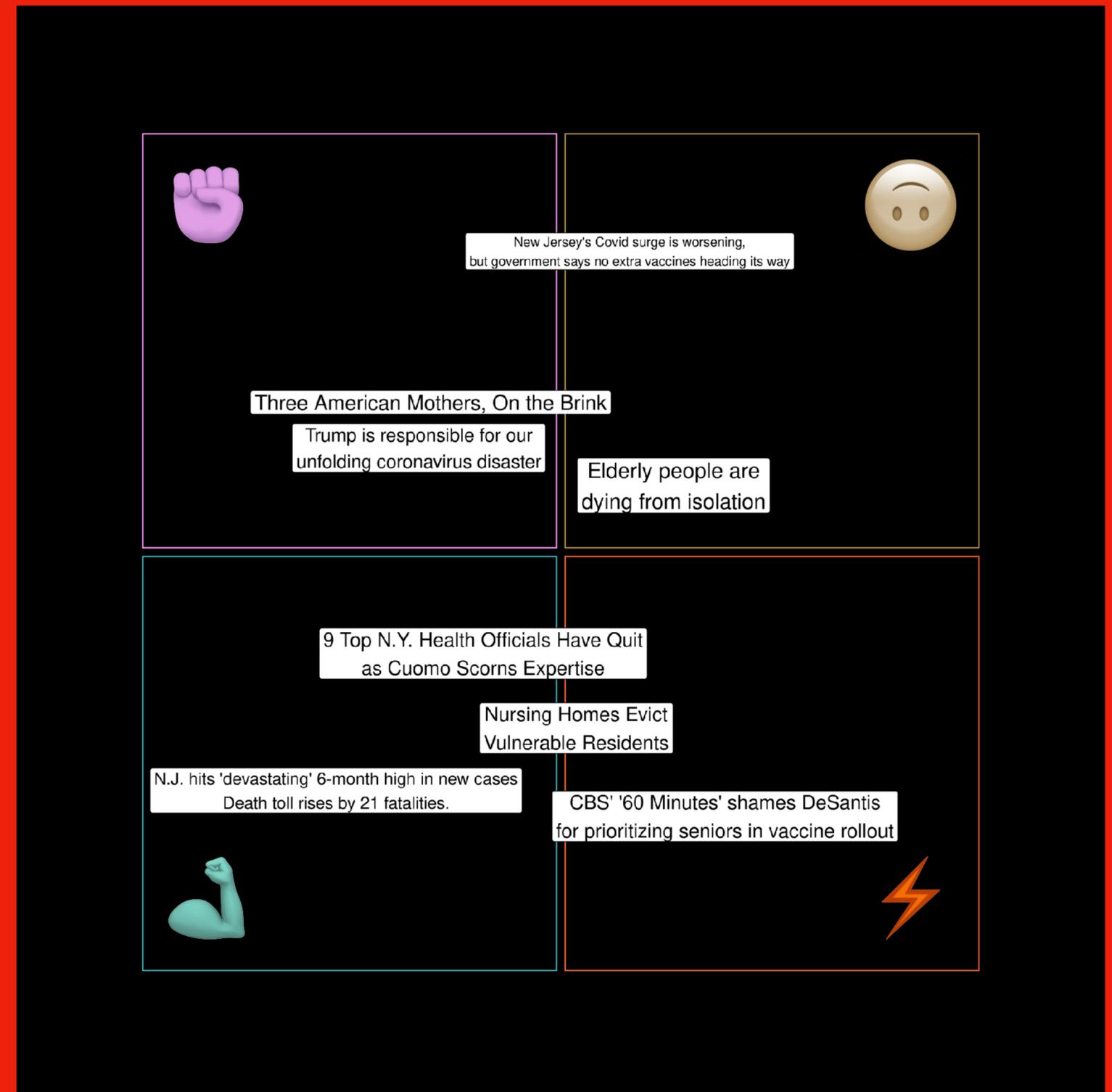
'It Became Sort of Lawless': Florida Vaccine Rollout Turns Into a Free-for-All

Florida decided people 65 and older should get the coronavirus vaccine first. But demand has overwhelmed supply, and people are frustrated.



Care calamity /news

The CARE CALAMITY narrative can have slightly different flavors for different audiences, across different platforms and media types. The news that TOUGH COOKIES and DON'T TREAD ON ME consume about threats, vulnerability, and violence as related to care tends to be more political than PEOPLE POWER and IF YOU SAY SO, although PEOPLE POWER consumed news that asserted Trump's responsibility for the pandemic response. News consumption was markedly lower for IF YOU SAY SO compared to other audiences.



Care calamity /ads

While aging and care content have relatively high reach in TV ads, media about aging makes up a fairly small portion of all TV ads. In over a half million TV ads analyzed, only ~1,500 clips featured content related to aging, including repeat airings of the same ad. AARP, healthcare, and TV news related to COVID account for a large portion of those ads. AARP's recent campaign leans into the Elders at Risk narrative, position itself as their "Fierce Defender."

Although outside of the scope of this analysis, TV infomercials and local news are other places where viewers are likely to encounter stories about aging and elder care.

"Warning this may be hard to watch a Tennessee home care nurse is accused of abusing a child with cerebral palsy."

LOCAL NEWS

"We're paying home care providers \$177 million on behalf of behalf of Westchester..."

"So how do personal injury law firms address that need? This is a particularly heartbreaking, set of situations happening in our country. You are right, Tony, although nursing home abuse isn't a new problem..."



Your Wise Friend and Fierce Defender

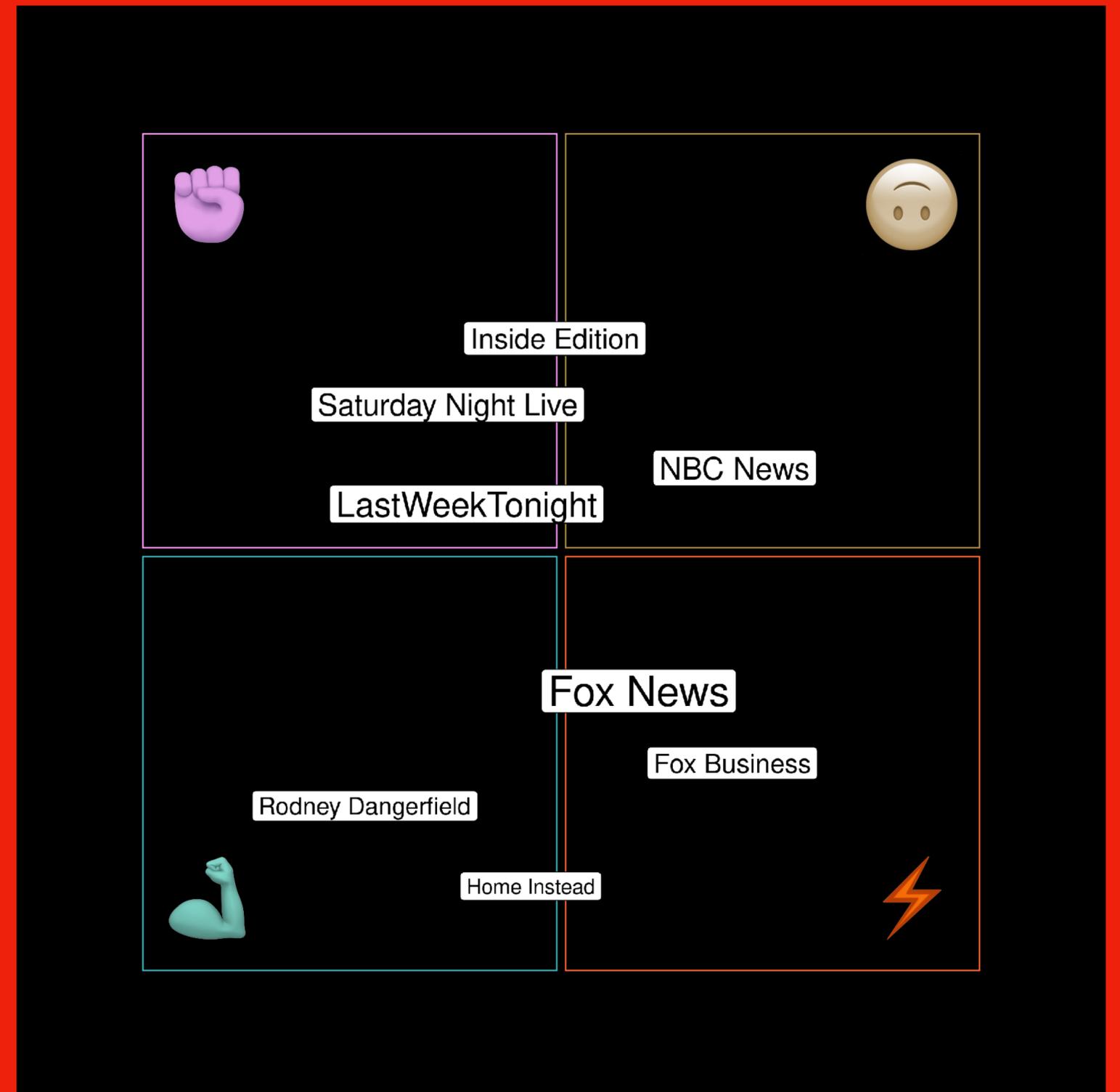
INFOMERCIAL

"We're saying good morning to "the home aides" - a Connecticut based company that provides private and affordable non-medical home care to seniors..."

Care calamity /youtube

Because it contains a little of every kind of content, YouTube is a great place to see how each audience seeks out stories in the parts of the culture they like to occupy.

PEOPLE POWER, IF YOU SAY SO, and DON'T TREAD ON ME are all largely consuming the calamity care narrative on YouTube. PEOPLE POWER consumes this narrative with humor, IF YOU SAY SO in mainstream news, and DON'T TREAD ON ME in right-wing news. Some TOUGH COOKIES may be reaching for some other narrative.

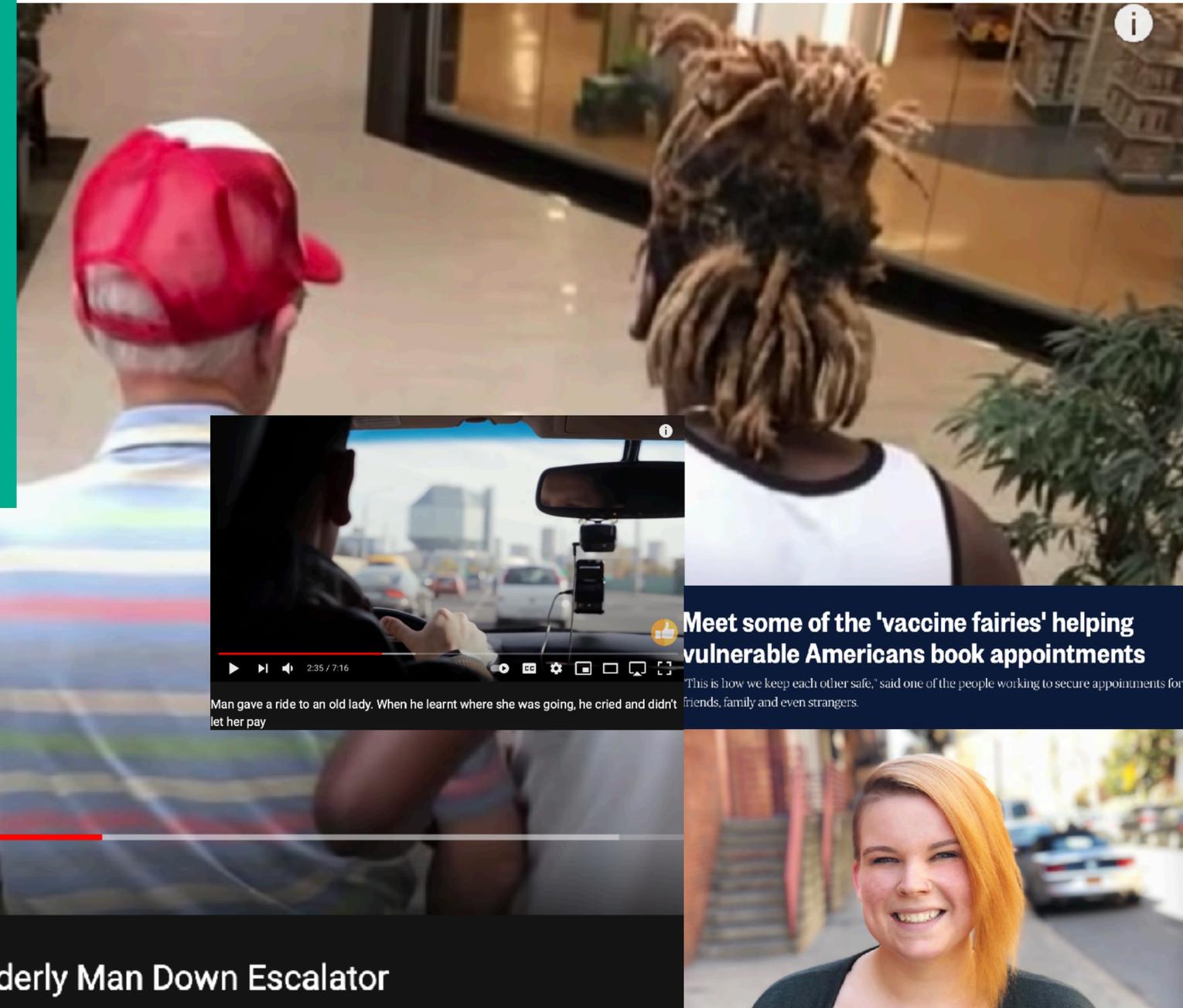
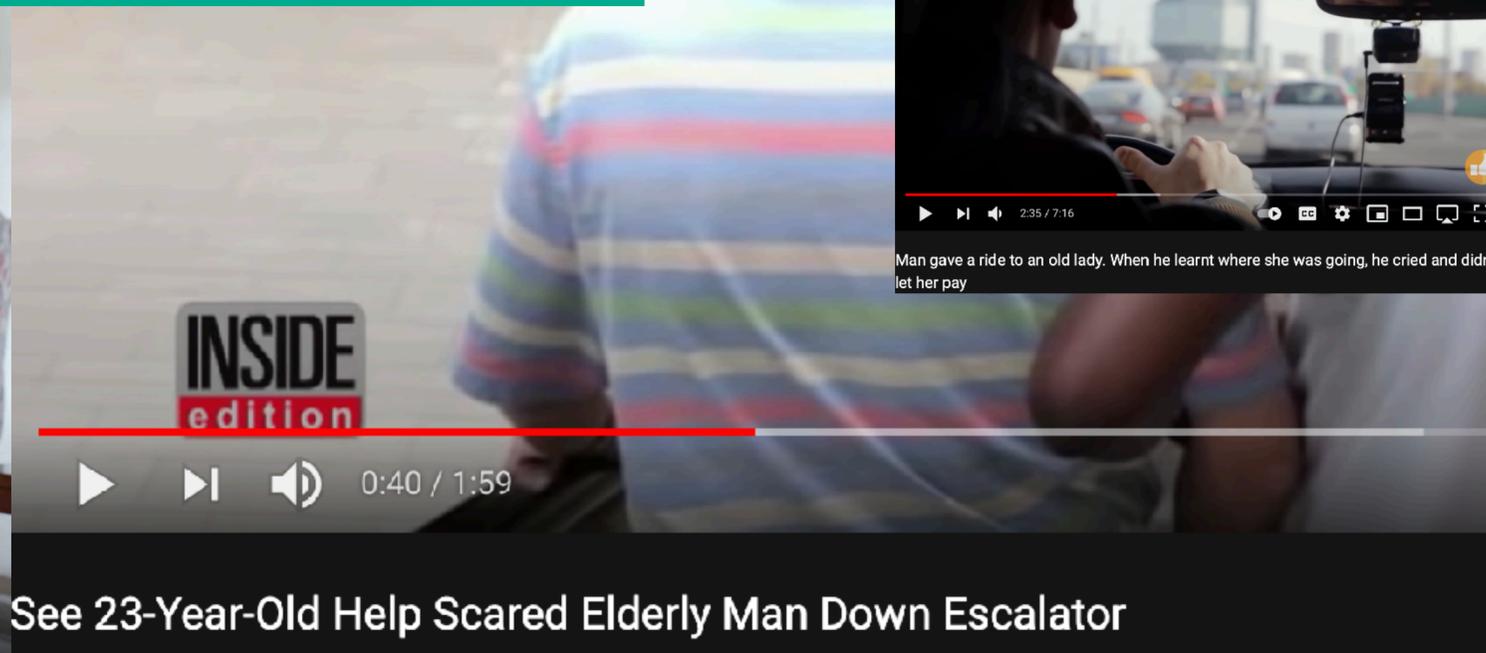


Helping hands /counterpoint

Occasionally, audiences seek and find lighter, happier stories, in which young people assist elders. Elders in these stories tend to be in need, but are treated with dignity and respect.

Caregivers Have Witnessed the Coronavirus's Pain. How Will They Vote?

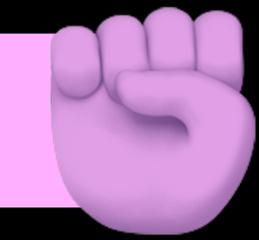
In Pennsylvania, deaths in nursing homes account for almost two-thirds of all virus-related fatalities. Some of the people working inside those facilities say the pandemic is shaping their politics.



Care encounters x audience

Although the CARE CALAMITY narrative predominated across all audiences, there were some important differences, nuances, and patterns in how our four different audiences tended to encounter care-related content.





Aging inequities

PEOPLE POWER, part of CAG's base audience, frequently see older Americans and aging in the context of inequity. In these equity stories, "elders" are referred to respectfully, but in the context of fearing for their safety. The authors are rarely elders themselves; they are advocates. Some of these stories are overtly political, blaming parties and politicians for hurting elders, and the tone is frequently angry.

Brazil's Indigenous communities mourn elders' deaths and the loss of their knowledge

"To see them go is, in a way, to witness another aspect of the destruction of our people," said Nara Baré, coordinator of COIAB, the largest group for Brazil's Indigenous tribes.



My White Adoptive Parents Struggled to See Me as Korean. Would They Have Understood My Anger at the Rise in Anti-Asian Violence?

Blacks and Hispanics are being short-changed on Covid-19 vaccines in Florida and elsewhere

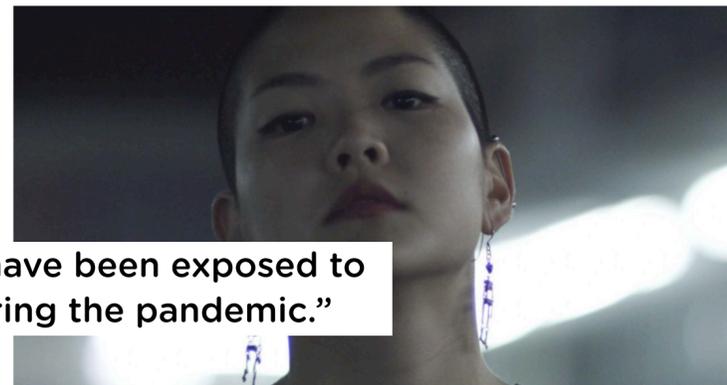
"Gov. DeSantis is treating communities of color just as an afterthought," said state Rep. Omari Hardy.

"I know lots of elderly people in my community who are struggling to get vaccinated,"



The short 'Home' tackles Asian American identity, racism

Los Angeles - April 8, 2021

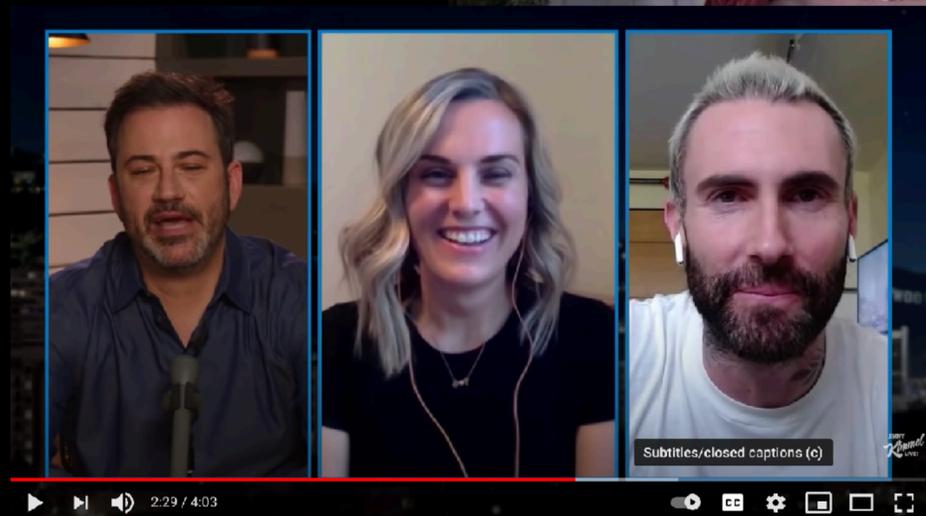


"All our Asian-American elders have been exposed to constant threats and attacks during the pandemic."

👊 Late-night comedy

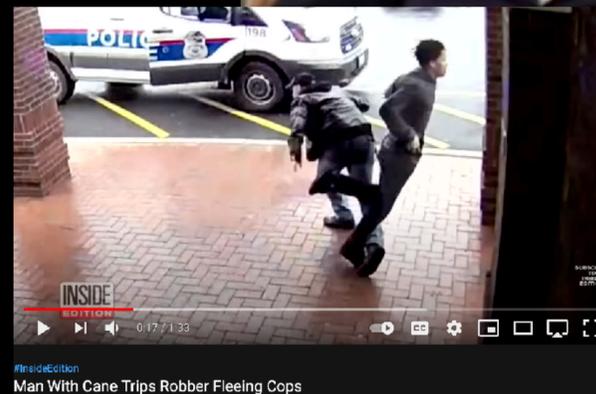
When PEOPLE POWER views content about aging or eldercare in entertainment, it often comes in the context of comedy, especially late-night comedy.

During the pandemic, *SNL* featured a family paying a socially distant visit to their grandmother. Late night hosts, including Jimmy Kimmel, paid tribute to healthcare workers, and, in this case, featured a nurse who worked at an assisted living facility.

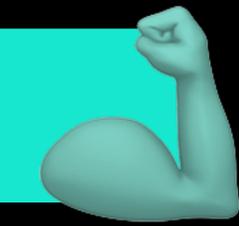


👊 Comedy & power /opportunity

Older people can retain their sense of humor and their personal power, even while needing increasing amounts of care. Showing characters with these qualities not only represents them with strength, but also helps engage IF YOU SAY SO, who do not typically engage in aging-related media, as well as PEOPLE POWER and TOUGH COOKIES.



#insideediton
Man With Cane Trips Robber Fleeing Cops



COVID curious

TOUGH COOKIES, who are equally likely to be Democrats or Republicans, actively seek out news content and consume a lot of it. During the pandemic, much of the aging content they saw involved COVID, and the controversy of Governor Cuomo and nursing home deaths became a hot topic.

9 Top N.Y. Health Officials Have Quit as Cuomo Scorns Expertise

“When I say ‘experts’ in air quotes, it sounds like I’m saying I don’t really trust the experts,” Gov. Andrew Cuomo said of pandemic policies. “Because I don’t.”



Dr. Nicole Saphier: COVID, vaccines and Dr. Fauci's advice – here's what we all need to keep in mind

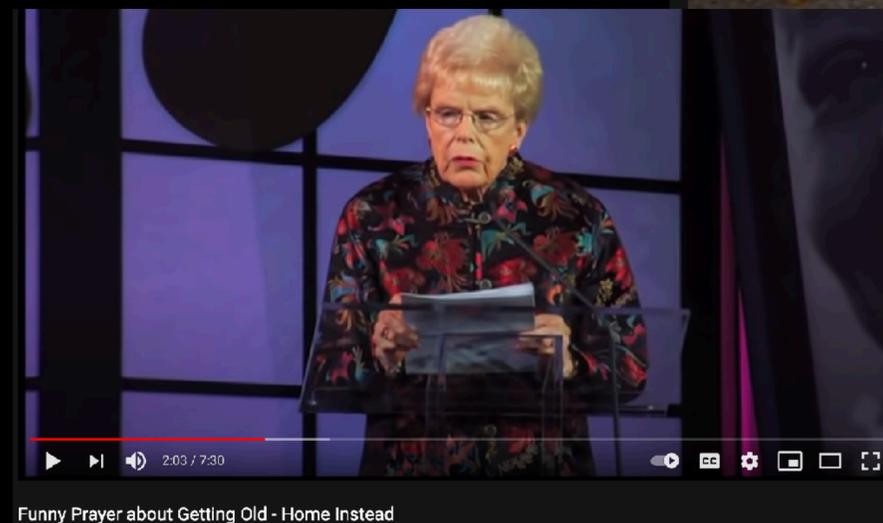
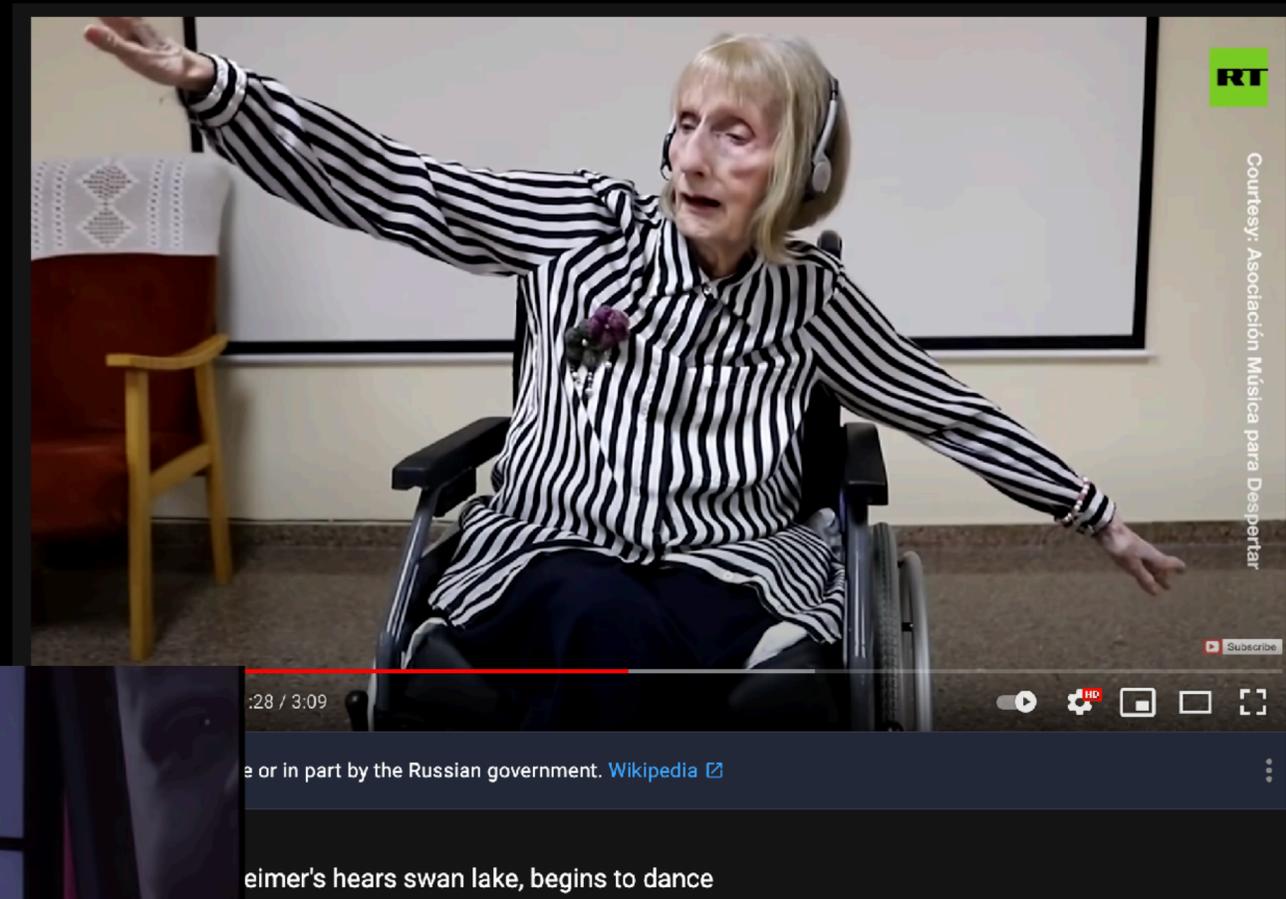


‘Falling through cracks’: Vaccine bypasses some older adults

By GILLIAN FLACCUS, HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and RUSS BYNUM March 4, 2021

Honoring the elderly

TOUGH COOKIES viewed more content with older characters than other audiences. The older characters tend to be either highly able and not in need of much care or, sometimes, in need of a large amount of care. In this media, aging and its discomforts are sometimes made light of. However, this is done in a way that older audiences are able to identify comfortably and commiserate.



Bridging the care gap /opportunity

There may be an opportunity to bridge the gap between needing no care and needing a lot of care by showing older characters who need a higher level of care that might burden a family, but is manageable with the assistance of professional caretakers.



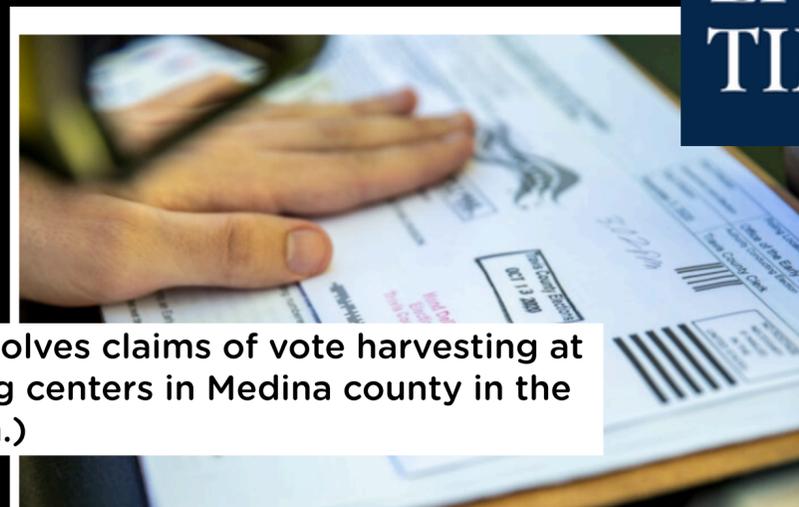
🙄 Rarely seen

IF YOU SAY SO views media featuring older characters less frequently, and, when they do, these characters and the situations they are in are often incidental to the plot. *Breaking Bad*, for example, has a plot line involving a nursing home. *Assisted Living*, a Tyler Perry show about a family that buys an assisted living facility, primarily features the family as characters, not the facility residents.



Disinfo on-ramp

DON'T TREAD ON ME is steeped in the same kind of overtly political conservative content as TOUGH COOKIES, but they're also seeing disinformation that uses fear for vulnerable elders as an on-ramp to disinformation and conspiracy theories about vaccines, politics, and other topics.



(The case involves claims of vote harvesting at assisted living centers in Medina county in the 2018 election.)

A poll worker stamps a voter's ballot before dropping it into a secure box at a ballot drop-off location in Austin, Texas, on Oct. 13, 2020. (Sergio Flores/Getty Images)

TEXAS

4 Arrested in Texas on 150 Counts of Voter Fraud



A man receives a COVID-19 vaccine at California State Polytechnic University-Pomona in Pomona, Calif., on Feb. 5, 2021. (Frederic J. Brown/AFP via Getty Images)

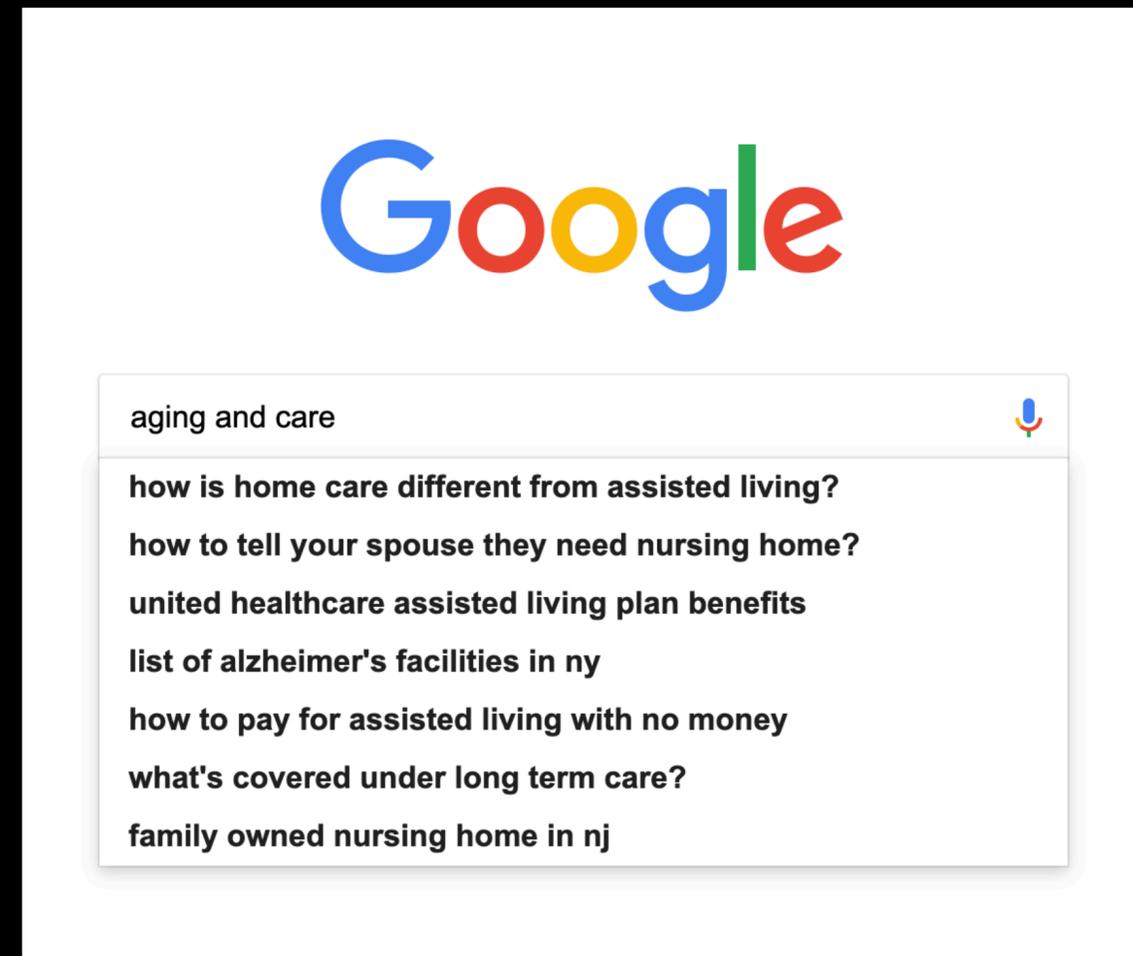
ANALYSIS PREMIUM

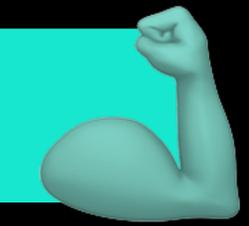
Deaths of Elderly Who Recovered From COVID-19, but Died After Vaccine, Raise Questions

Care encounters x search

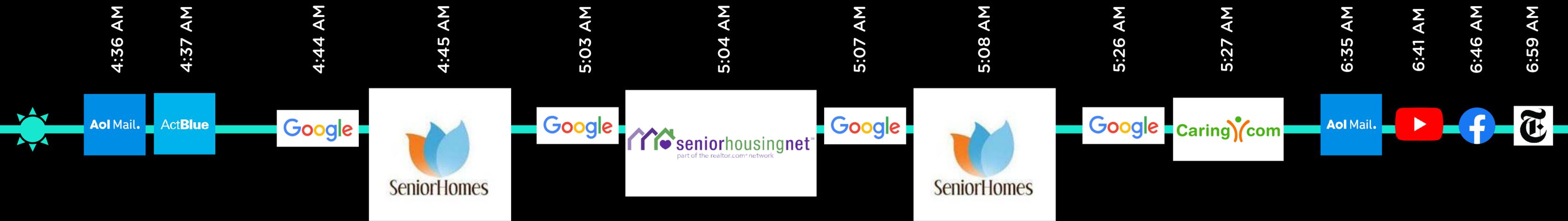
When people seek out content about aging and care, they are almost always seeking information about how to find a care solution for someone or how to find a job as a care professional. This is a potential context for effective narrative intervention and merits additional exploration.

So we created two case studies centering search behavior in one 24-hour period for two audience members. These case studies derive from real audience encounters with search and care content, but we shuffled together content consumed by multiple audience members to surface important characteristic patterns and features, while protecting privacy. We call these case studies synthetic behavioral profiles, or “synths.”



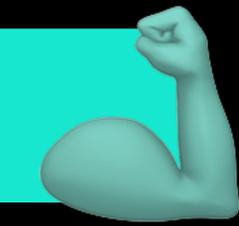


“Seeker”



SEEKER is an illustration of a typical “getting care” online search episode. The most important thing: it is protracted and uninterrupted. SEEKER spends almost an hour very early in the morning seeking local care options. The long window of dedicated time suggests that getting care—for themselves or a loved one—is very important to SEEKER, not just something that came up casually in some other context.

As we follow SEEKER through this experience take note of how information and marketing intersect and overlap. This is not a planning or learning experience: it is shopping.



“Seeker”

4:44 AM



4:45 AM

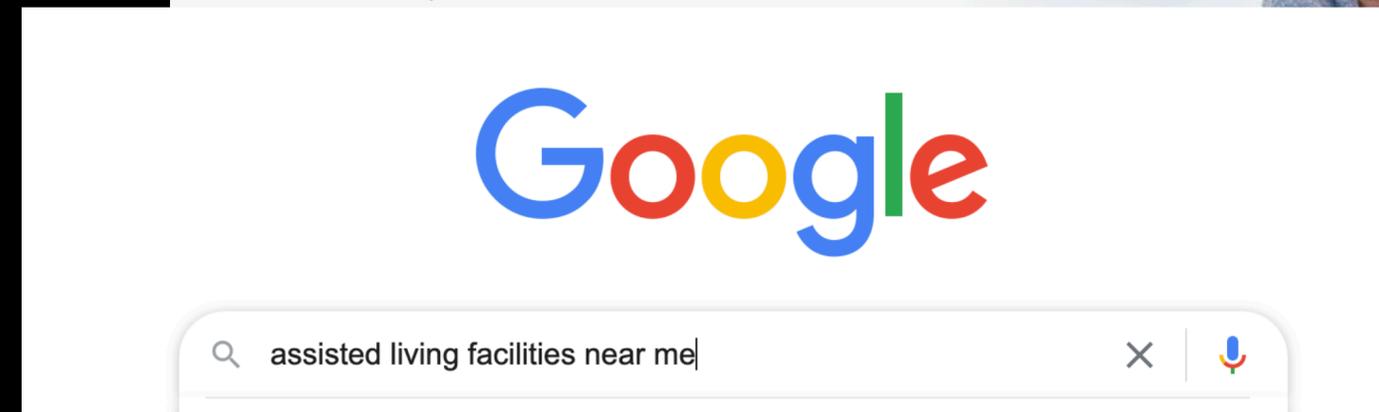
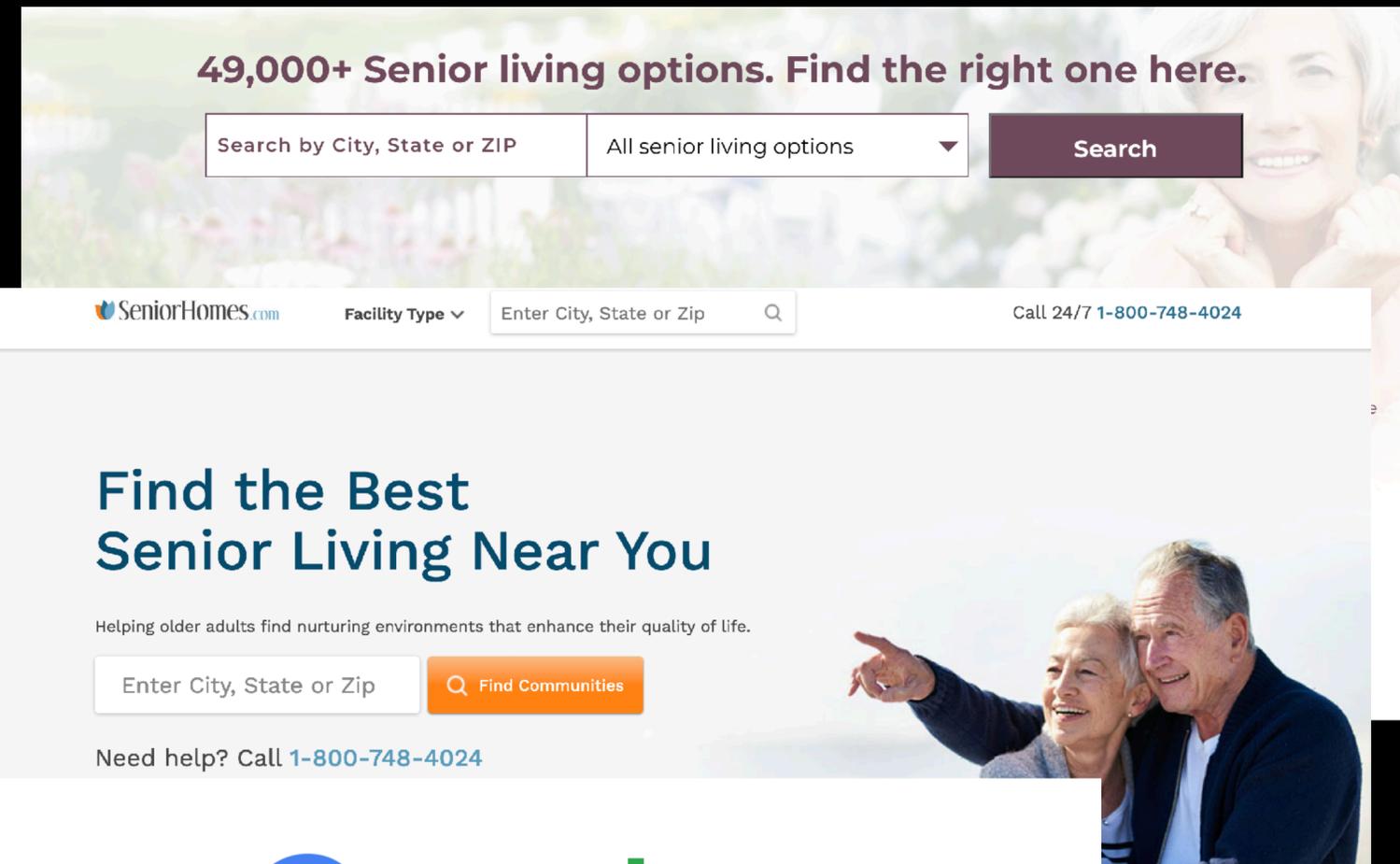


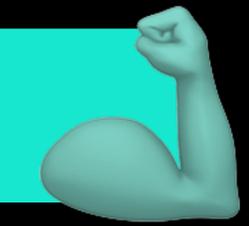
5:03 AM

5:04 AM

SEEKER visits the same sites several times, exploring for several minutes each time.

One of the sites SEEKER visits mentions home care, but doesn't offer a decision architecture. It contrasts "Home Care" with "Affordable Care" and with "55+ Living."





“Seeker”

4:45 AM



5:03 AM

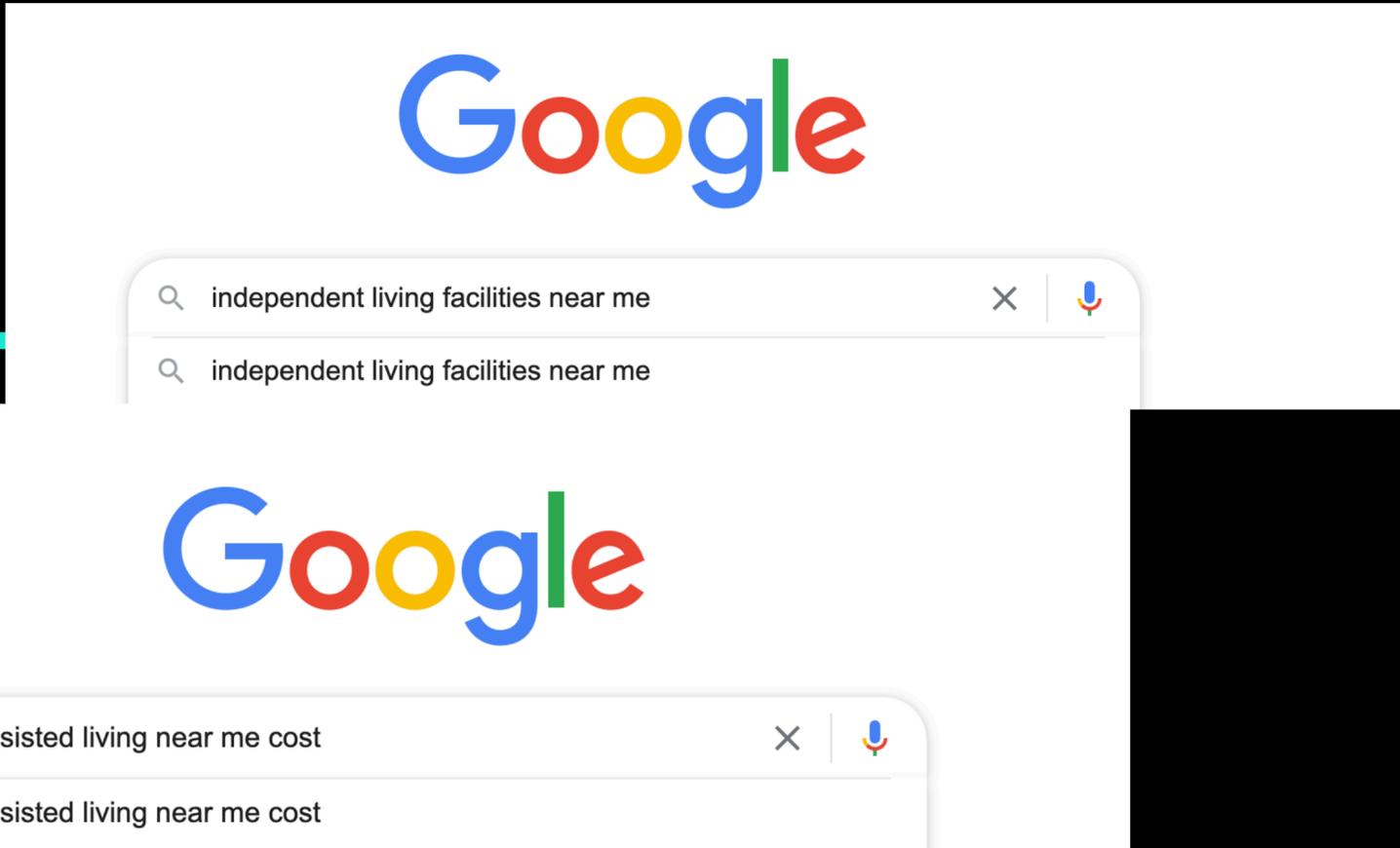


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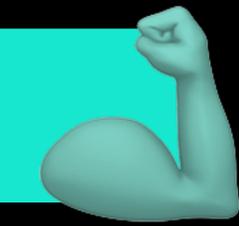
5:07 AM



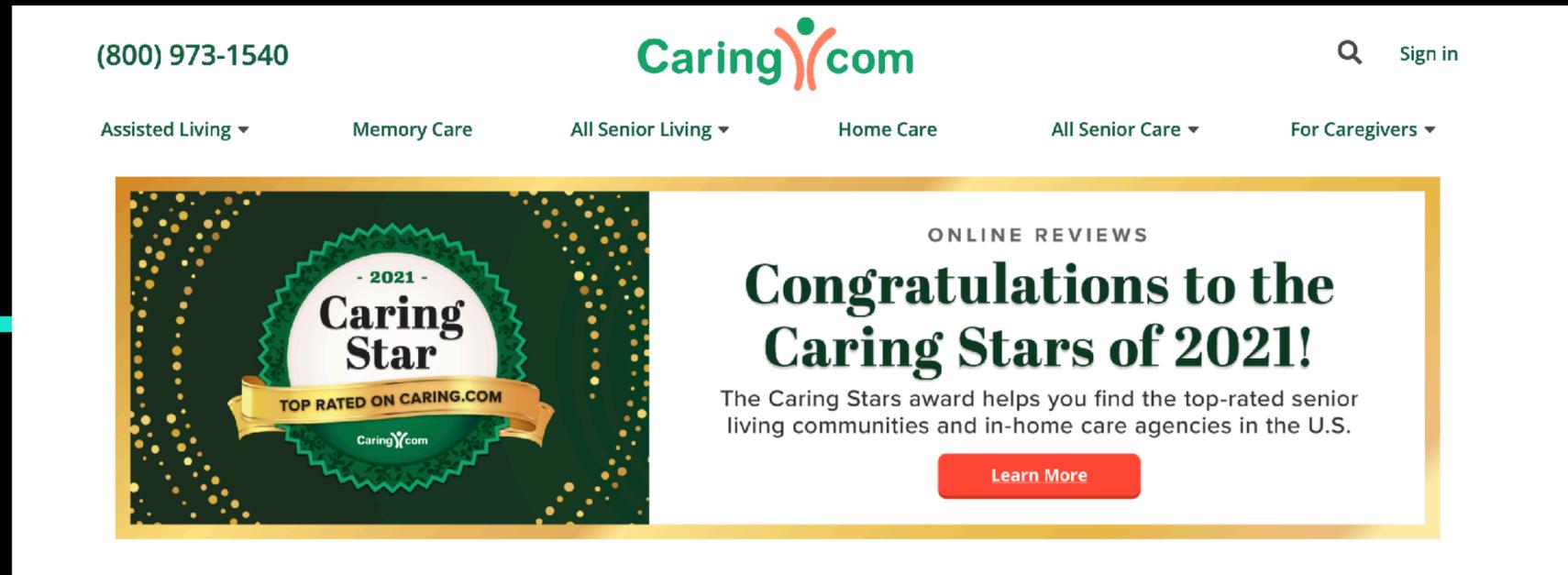
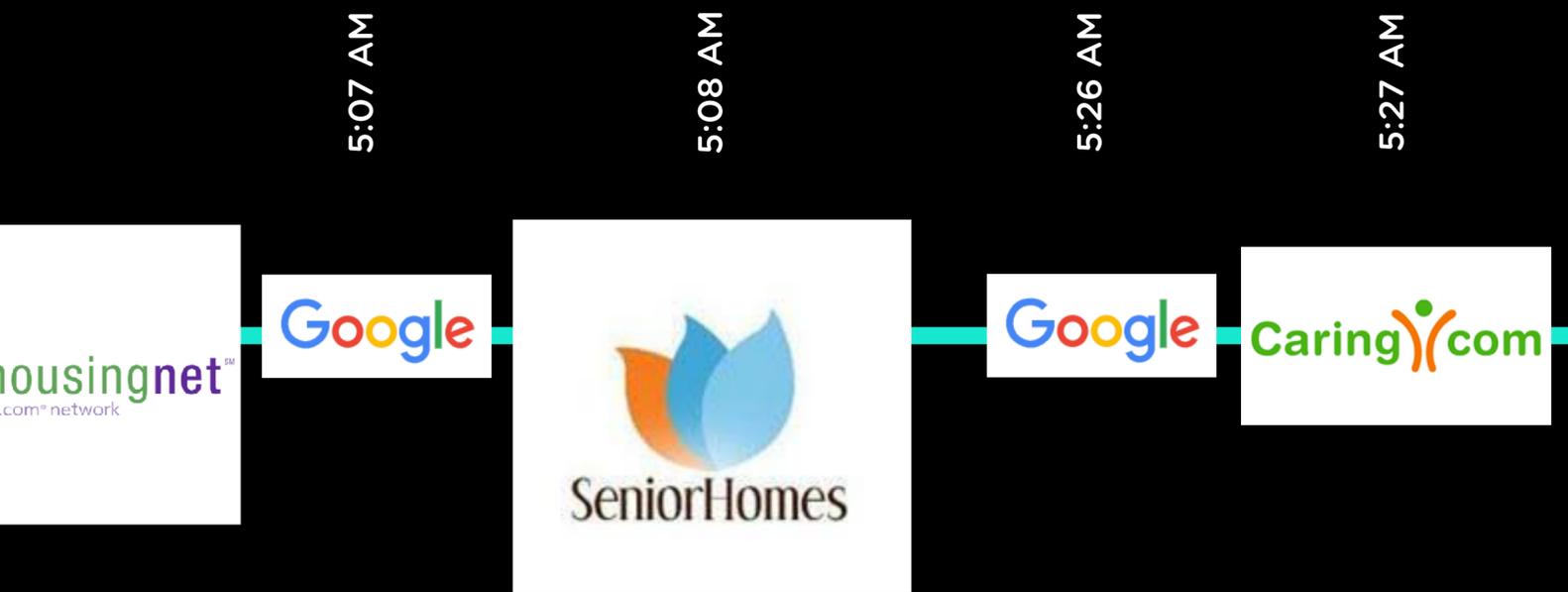
5:08 AM



We don't know if SEEKER is looking for care for themselves or someone else. (Many audience members with this profile are in their 70's.) But their searches reflect their questions and concerns. The term "independent" comes up again and again; so does the cost of care.

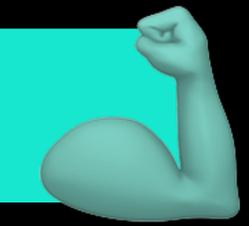


“Seeker”



Late in the search session, SEEKER lands on a commercial site that again mentions “home care” without a decision architecture that might make SEEKER feel confident in seeking or choosing care.

None of the site’s navigation speaks to cost or independence, the two concerns that have come up for SEEKER in this session.



“Seeker”

5:27 AM

6:35 AM

6:41 AM

6:46 AM

6:59 AM



This session ends as SEEKER returns to their email, Facebook and news. SEEKER has encountered lots of different locations for living, but few guidelines about what they can ask for or hope to experience in a care situation.

One reason that it is difficult for audiences to connect with caregivers as partners in the care experience may be that the experience of researching and acquiring care treats care and the caregiver as a product.

“Caregiver”



CAREGIVER is an illustration of a typical “how to become a caregiver” online search episode. In the morning, CAREGIVER seeks information about how to open an assisted living facility in Minnesota, and, later in the morning, how to open a nurse staffing agency. In the evening, CAREGIVER seeks out information about education and majors at two North Dakota Universities, either to attend themselves or possibly for potential employees. In the middle of the day, CAREGIVER searches for an incarcerated person in Florida and spends time on websites that send packages to incarcerated persons.

“Caregiver”

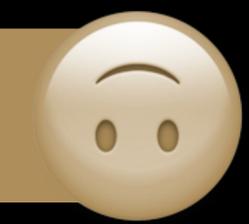
7:41 AM

8:45 AM

8:51 AM



CAREGIVER’s first online activity in the morning is seeking information about opening up an assisted living facility in Minnesota, including pertinent state regulations, online Skillshare classes about building a business, and some informational videos on YouTube. CAREGIVER hops back and forth between Google and these sites.



“Caregiver”

3:07 PM

BLAIR

3:27 PM

PrisonPro

4:00 PM

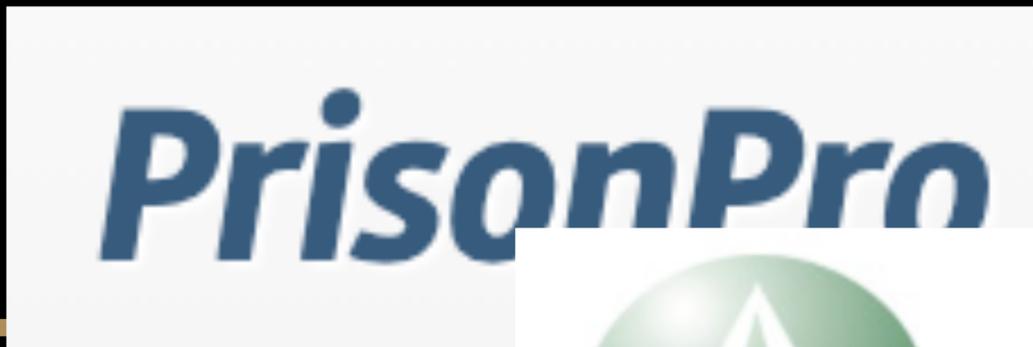


4:31 PM

Google

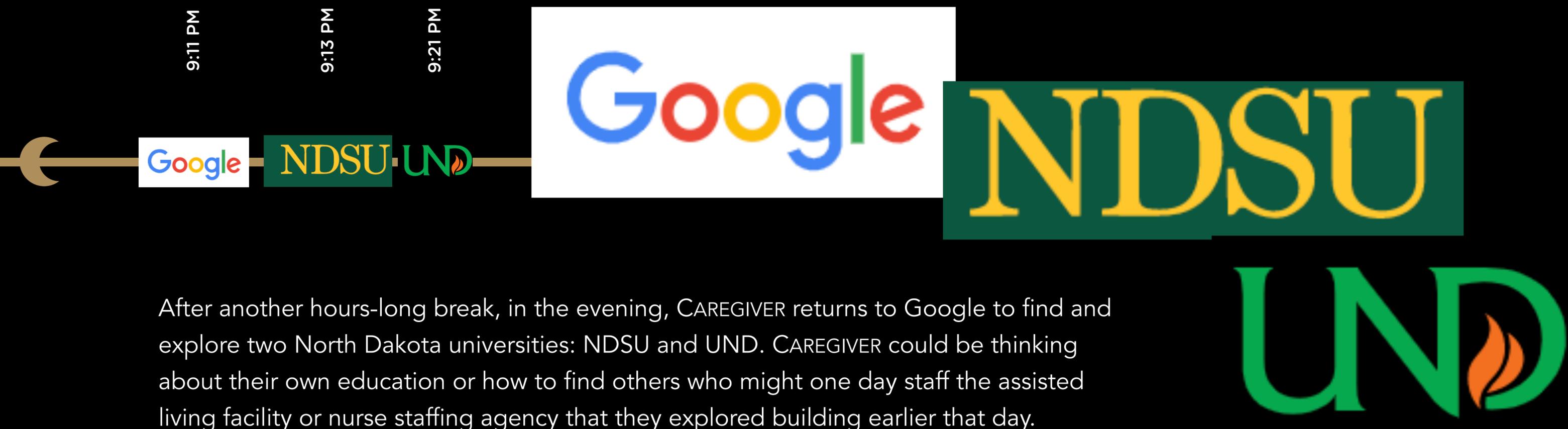
4:43 PM

skyscape



In the mid-afternoon, after a little shopping, CAREGIVER does some personal caregiving. They search for an incarcerated person in Florida. Later, they return to Google to find a way to send a pack to incarcerated persons. Afterward, they return to Google, and head to a website that provides healthcare information for students and practicing healthcare professionals.

“Caregiver”



After another hours-long break, in the evening, CAREGIVER returns to Google to find and explore two North Dakota universities: NDSU and UND. CAREGIVER could be thinking about their own education or how to find others who might one day staff the assisted living facility or nurse staffing agency that they explored building earlier that day.

While CAREGIVER may be an entrepreneur or student, their online behavior shows that they spend much of their day thinking about how to care for others personally and how they might build a career caring for people professionally.

The background is a complex, colorful illustration. At the top, a large, gnarled tree with green leaves and a wooden treehouse is set against a blue sky. Below the tree, a large, circular globe is depicted, surrounded by various musical notes and staves. In the center of the globe, several hands of different colors (blue, purple, orange, green) are shown holding or touching the globe. The overall color palette is dominated by blues, greens, and yellows, with a dark, moody atmosphere.

Thanks for listening


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